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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION - IRAQ

On November 23, conservative, influential newspaper-of-record "El Mercurio" (circ. 16,807) carried a column by international commentator Karin Ebensperger entitled, "Iraq: Bush and Legitimacy." Quotes:

"The U.S. Constitution has always impressed me. It is one of the most important works in man's political history...understandably something of which Americans are proud.

That is why I am very critical of the way in which Washington sometimes carries out its foreign policy. A society that began with visionary "Founding Fathers" who sought a balance between national interests and a moral focus on life is on occasion ruled by presidents who use those elevated principles to act in a questionable manner in other countries.

The invasion of Iraq is an example of this double standard, in that Washington acts for its interests while it preaches noble ideals. There is still discussion on whether President Bush set upon Iraq for oil...or to end the task his father chose to postpone...or because he felt pressured after the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon.

What we do know today is that the invasion did not contribute to the anti-terrorism fight: it was never proven that Hussein...had ties to Al Qaeda and the weapons of mass destruction were never found. President Bush did not perform at the level expected of a leader of a great democracy, in which legitimacy is conferred by the truth of the information given to the people. Even if he did not act as a statesman upon invading and he did not foresee the total collapse of post-Hussein Iraq, Bush can still improve matters. The manner of the withdrawal from Iraq and the conditions in which that country is left will be more important for history."

KELLY